

A NEWCOMER TO THE SMALBLAAR

By A. MARK MACKERETH

THIS being my first season of trout fishing at the Cape, it gives me great pleasure to record a few of my impressions of the delightful little river—the Smalblaar.

First of all I consider it a first-class dry-fly river, in fact all the trout I have taken there have been on dry fly. What a glorious setting—whether one catches trout or otherwise! The Smalblaar is so reminiscent of some of the beautiful little Austrian mountain streams I had the good fortune to fish in 1959.

On my first visit to the Smalblaar the mountain peaks were snow-capped, with the river running rather high. Nevertheless, the water was very clear but the trout were reluctant to make an appearance—perhaps the reason being that first and foremost I am a dry-fly addict and I persisted, hoping to get a rise. I must admit I had a blank day as far as the trout were concerned, yet I thoroughly enjoyed myself in this most peaceful spot.

On the next occasion I found the trout rising beautifully. I had on my cast a Wickham's Fancy—this being one of my favourite flies on the Yorkshire rivers and which I always used with great success. It was accepted at the first cast, and thinking the poor chap had made a dreadful mistake, I opened the stomach, which was full of black insects—beetles, etc. (the names of which I am not aware). I changed my fly to a Black Spider—the nearest approach I had in my box to the contents of the stomach, but the fish were not interested. I changed back to a Wickham, which was again accepted without hesitation. I had a bag of fine trout and also returned numerous smaller fish to the water.

On subsequent visits I have also been successful with Wickham's Fancy, which seems to bear no resemblance to any insect on the water.

Some anglers seem to think that in such fast-running water the trout take anything that comes their way. I hardly think this is the case as I have spent a great deal of time experimenting with a variety of dry flies.

Anyway, whatever the case may be, I hope fellow anglers will give Wickham's Fancy a trial. "Tight Lines and Petri Heil!"